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ABSTRACT

The document outlines 15 topics, each with concepts and selected references, to illustrate the relevance of psychology for understanding and coping with the threat of nuclear war. Awareness of the literature is intended to encourage psychologists to become more active in applying psychological concepts to nuclear weapons issues. The articles and books selected for the extensive but not exhaustive bibliography deal explicitly with nuclear weapons issues and are either authored by psychologists or are substantially psychological in content or methodology. The topics include: (1) apathy about the threat of nuclear war; (2) scenarios for nuclear war (psychological aspects); (3) the nuclear arms race (psychological determinants); (4) U.S. and Soviet perceptions (enemy perception processes and effects); (5) the psychology of deterrence; (6) nuclear weapon policy-making processes; (7) crisis management; (8) tension reduction, cooperation, and arms control; (9) psychological effects of nuclear war; (10) psychological effects about nuclear war threat; (11) public opinion on nuclear war issues; (12) approaches for promoting positive attitudes toward arms control; (13) determinants of political activism for arms control; (14) applications of psychology to peace work; and (15) the role of psychology in the development of nuclear weapon policy. (TRS)

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PSYCHOLOGY AND NUCLEAR WEAPON ISSUES: TOPICS, CONCEPTS, AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Compiled by

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PSYCHOLOGY AND NUCLEAR WEAPON ISSUES: TOPICS, CONCEPTS, AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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The purpose of this outline of topics, concepts, and selected references is to illustrate the relevance of psychology for understanding and coping with the threat of nuclear war. We hope that awareness of the psychological literature described here will encourage all psychologists (teachers, authors, researchers, practitioners) to become more active in applying psychological concepts to nuclear weapon issues.

The articles and books selected for this bibliography deal explicitly with nuclear weapon issues and are either authored by psychologists or are substantially psychological in content or methodology. The bibliography is a sample, not an exhaustive list, of the available psychological literature on this topic. We attempted to avoid redundancy and to select references that are readily available in libraries.

This project was sponsored by the Psychologists For Social Responsibility Task Force on Curriculum (Linden Nelson, Chair) and the Society For the Psychological Study of Social Issues Task Force on Peace (Richard V. Wagner, Chair). Helpful suggestions were received from Professors Daniel J. Christie, Daniel M. Mayton II, Robert S. Moyer, and Neil Wollman.

I. Apathy about the threat of nuclear war

A. Concepts

Defense mechanisms, psychic numbing, habituation, self-efficacy expectations, remoteness of reinforcers and punishers, social comparison processes, diffusion of responsibility

B. References (See bibliography below for complete description of references)

Frank (1982), pp. 7, 26-33
Grinspoon (1986)
Lifton & Falk (1982), Chapters 1, 2, 10
Mack (1985)
South (1984)

II. Scenarios for nuclear war (psychological aspects)

A. Concepts
Effects of crisis stress on information processing and problem solving, anger and aggression, retribution, drug abuse, psychopathology, physical incapacity, misperception, deficient values, groupthink, human error, escalation, threat assessment

B. References
Fischer (1983)
Frank (1982), Chapter 4
Frei (1983), Chapters 2, 5-7
Holsti (1972)
Janis (1985)
Lebow (1981), Chapters 5 & 6
Thompson (1985), Chapter 4
White (1984), Chapter 5

III. The nuclear arms race (psychological determinants)

A. Concepts
Fear, malignant social process, overgeneralization of competitive behavior, macho-pride, persistence of prenuclear conceptions, ideology, economic incentives, power maintenance tendencies, enemy perception processes, perception theory

B. References
Chilstrom (1984)
Deutsch (1983)
Frank (1982), pp. 1-11
Holt (1984)
Kull (1985)
Mack (1985)
Nelson & Beardsley (1986)
Walsh (1984), pp. 21-43
White (1984), Chapters 2-4, 9-12, 16

IV. U.S. and Soviet perceptions (enemy perception processes and effects)

A. Concepts
Exaggeration, mirror images, effects of competition, self-fulfilling prophecy, cognitive consistency tendencies, self-justification and dissonance reduction, dehumanization, conceptually guided perception, fundamental attribution error, self-serving bias, egocentric perception, conformity pressures, social traps, reinforcing social and emotional effects of having a common enemy, empathy, nationalism, projection dichotomization, integrative complexity

B. References
Bronfenbrenner (1961)
Costanza (1984)
Deutsch (1983)
Frank (1982), pp. 7-10 & Chapter 7
Herrmann (1985)
Jervis (1976)
Milburn, Stewart, & Herrmann (1982)
Montville (1985)
Moyer (1985)
Plous (1985b)
Plous & Zimbardo (1984)
Tetlock (1985)
White (1984), Chapters 2-4, 10-12, 15

V. The psychology of deterrence

A. Concepts
Punishment, expected costs and benefits, credibility, minimal deterrence, stability, assumption of rationality, flexible response, mutual assured destruction, deterrence vs. spiral models, effects of threat, deterrence vs. alternative social influence processes, perception theory

B. References
Frank (1982), Chapter 8
Frei (1983), Chapter 4
Jervis, Lebow & Stein (1985)
Kull (1985)
Lebow (1981)
Morgan (1983)
Nelson & Beardsley (1986)
Smoke (1984)
Tetlock (1986), pp. 560-563
White (1984), Chapters 7, 9, 17

VI. Nuclear weapon policy-making processes

A. Concepts
Rationality, shared assumptions, groupthink, probability and threat assessment, integrative complexity, deterrence vs. conflict spiral images, perception theory

B. References
Fischer (1983)
Fischhoff (1983)
George (1980)
Janis (1985)
Kull (1985)
Tetlock (1983)
Tetlock (1985)

VII. Crisis management

A. Concepts
Stress, arousal, hypervigilance, information processing, problem solving, groupthink & premature closure, communication, perceiving the perspective of other parties, crisis control centers and procedures

B. References
Blechman (1985)
George (1980)
Holsti (1972)
Janis (1985)
Lebow (1981)

VIII. Tension reduction, cooperation, and arms control

A. Concepts
Superordinate goals, negotiation, bargaining, mediation, Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension-Reduction (GRIT)

B. References
Deutsch (1983), pp. 21-31
Deutsch (1986)
Fisher (1984)
Frank (1982), Chapters 10-12
Kelman (1986)
Linskold (1978)
Osgood (1962)
Pilisuk (1984)
Plous (1985a)
Pruitt (1981)
Stoll & McAndrew (1986)
Thompson (1985), Chapter 5
White (1984), Chapters 6-8, 17-20

IX. Psychological effects of nuclear war

A. Concepts
Disorientation, immobilization, invisible contamination, victimization, psychic numbing

B. References
Allen (1985)
Katz (1982), Chapters 7, 9 and Appendix A
Lifton (1982)
Lifton & Falk (1982), Chapter 4 and Appendix
Thompson (1985), Chapters 2 & 3

X. Psychological effects of the nuclear war threat

A. Concepts
Worry, anxiety, depression, sense of futility and meaninglessness, loss of motivation, reluctance to delay gratification, effects on family planning and religious beliefs and concern for the future, enhanced commitment to preserve life

B. References
Goodman, Mack, Beardslee & Snow (1983)
Grinspoon (1986)
Lifton & Falk (1982), Chapters 5-8, 11
Macy (1983)
Newcomb (1986)
Schwebel (1982)

XI. Public opinion on nuclear weapon issues

A. Concepts
Fears and apprehensions, judgments of probability and consequences of nuclear war, cognitive images of war, perceptions of the arms race, perceptions of Soviet intentions and behavior, opinions about arms control and nuclear weapon policies

B. References
Feshback, Kandel, & Haist (1985)
Fiske, Pratto, & Pavelchak (1983)
Klineberg (1984)
Kramer, Kallick, & Milburn (1983)
Larsen (1985)
Nelson (1986)
Newcomb (1986)
Oskamp, et. al. (1985)
Yankelovich & Doble (1984)
Zweigenhaft (1985)

XII. Approaches for promoting positive attitudes toward arms control

A. Concepts
Applications of research on persuasion, theories of attitude change, effects of films and educational interventions

B. References
Feshback, Kandel, & Haist (1985)
Nelson (1986)
Oskamp, et. al. (1985)
Schofield & Pavelchak (1985)
White (1984), Chapter 21
Wollman (1985), Chapters 23-28
Zweigenhaft (1985)

XIII. Determinants of political activism for arms control

A. Concepts
Risk evaluation, efficacy judgments, moral responsibility judgments, political orientation, reinforcement

B. References
Fiske, Pratto, & Pavelchak (1983)
Nevin (1985)
Schofield & Pavelchak (1985)
Tyler & McGraw (1983)
Werner & Roy (1985)
Wollman (1985), Chapter 10

XIV. Applications of psychology to peace work

A. Concepts
Empowerment, time management, personal adjustment, personal appeal, burnout, organizing, motivating, decision making, group dynamics, persuasion, influencing educational systems and governments

B. References
Abelson & Zimbardo (1970)
Macy (1983)
Nevin (1985)
Wollman (1985)

XV. The role of psychology in the development of nuclear weapon policy

A. Concepts
Research, teaching, professional organizations, lobbying, contributions to peace organizations, influencing public opinion, influencing decision-making and negotiation procedures, predicting behavior in complex natural settings, applying knowledge about conflict and conflict resolution

B. References
Feshback, Kandel, & Haist (1985)
Fischhoff, Pidgeon, & Fiske (1983)
Klineberg (1984)
McConnell, et. al. (1986)
Morawski & Goldstein (1985)
Nelson (1985)
Oskamp (1985)
Polyson, Stein, & Sholley (1986)
Tetlock (1986)
White (1985)

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